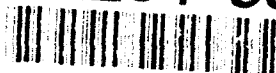


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THE INDUCTION OF GENERAL SHERMAN

BY

COLONEL TIMOTHY W. NAVONE
United States Army Reserve

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THE INDUCTION OF GENERAL SHERMAN

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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THE INDUCTION OF GENERAL SHERMAN

INTRODUCTION

The Hall of Great Captains in Valhalla is suitably decorated for the purpose. The accoutrements and banners of the American Civil War are displayed, for today one of its Great Captains will be considered for induction into the ranks of the Great Captains of history. These Captains will then lead the forces of Odin on the last day of the last great battle of the last campaign - on Ragnarok, Doomsday. [1]

This candidate did not die in heroic combat, as the original recruits for Valhalla had done in Scandinavian mythology. But Odin, in preparing for the last day of battle, soon realized that if he was to defeat the forces of darkness, he needed to strengthen his forces for Ragnarok. Thus the door was opened to all those who died heroic deaths in battle. Soon after that, the doors of the warrior's rest were open to those who had served honorably and faithfully in combat, for every combatant from slinger, archer, cannoneer, or airmen would be needed. [2]

This certainly included a number of exceptional commanders, for whom Odin soon realized he would need only the best to lead his hosts if he and mankind were to prevail on Doomsday. So he called forth the Great Captains to lead his hosts. As his hosts grew for that epic day, he realized that he needed still more Great Captains than those identified by Napoleon, so he called

forth Napoleon himself, and directed him to formulate a tribunal to select additional great captains. They must be exceptional commanders, proven in the wars of mankind, capable of leading warriors--soldiers and sailors battle proven--for he could not risk offending his legions who trained so faithfully.

As forces continued to grow, for the wars of mankind seem to know no end, Napoleon called forth his Great Captains of the past and presented them with the problem--that more Great Captains must be added to their ranks. But how to judge? There were many able commanders to judge from, but he knew that there were too few suitable for the great responsibility that must befall them.

He thus created a council of his previously chosen Great Captains to select new members to their rank. This council would seek men who could live up to the deeds of their predecessors, and to the expectations of Odin and his brother Mars, and to the warriors of Valhalla. Men who could join the ranks of Great Captains.

Thus the stage is set. . . a man enters the great hall of warriors with its 540 doors, its walls of razor edged spears, and its roof of shining shields. He wears not the fine garb of a General of the Army of the United States, but an open blue private's jacket, the stars of a major general on his epaulets, his red beard punctuated by a cigar, his tattered campaign hat under his left arm, much as he looked during the Atlanta Campaign. The man is William Tecumseh Sherman, former banker and lawyer, but. . . first and foremost a soldier.

He is greeted by his old friend and counsel, Major General William Halleck, who will assist him. [3]

Will Sherman meet the test to become a Great Captain and take his seat at the tribunal?

Let us enter the hall and be seated as the Tribunal of Great Captains readies itself to hear the evidence. . . .

I

"You might as well appeal against
the thunder-storms as against these
terrible hardships of war...."
William T. Sherman
September 12, 1864

In deference to the candidate, Adjutant's Call rang out across the Great Hall.

'Warriors, please be seated. The proceedings will begin in exactly ten minutes. General Sherman, before the tribunal of Great Captains arrives I would like to introduce myself, though we have met before I wish to instruct you in the proceedings of the hearing. I am recorder and general counsel for the tribunal, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver Wendell Holmes, 20th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, and former Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.' [4]

'As the spectators know, the selection of a Great Captain is based upon a combination of things. The first criterion is the thirteen timeless verities of warfare, [5] which we believe is only right. For how could we expect our longbowmen to fight against a Sherman Tank?'

An oath is heard as a man dressed in the uniform of a World War II British Field Marshall stands.

'Sorry! I didn't mean to say that, Field Marshall Montgomery, it was a slip of the tongue. Pardon me, I meant to say Field Marshall, the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein. What I

originally meant to say was an armored vehicle. Now, Field Marshall, if you will permit, I shall proceed.'

'I should point out, General Sherman, that the Field Marshall represents the faction of our warriors who oppose your nomination, for since the selection of Great Captains by Napoleon, no candidate has gone unchallenged. And there are even those who still challenge his Great Captains.' [6]

'The second criterion is based upon the military maxims of Napoleon himself, but due to their large number, [7] they have been condensed by the Tribunal and somewhat combined with what are now known as the principles of war.'

'Thirdly, what has the candidate done to instruct his fellow warriors in the art of war? Has he expanded their knowledge and ability. . . ?'

'Fourthly, has he cared for his warriors? Has he kept them polished and bright as a sword, or has he let them rust and discarded them at the end of the campaign--for the ranks of Valhalla have long memories.'

'Fifth, has the candidate shown personal courage on the field of honor?'

'And, lastly, what legacy, if any, has he provided to the profession of arms? Has he advanced the military theory and the art of war? Or has he merely been an able practitioner of someone else's theory and example?'

'However you respond to the above, General Sherman, from this day hence the findings of this court will be known

throughout the Legions of Valhalla, whether you are accepted or rejected. For many able, brave, and true. . . and some not so true, have come before us. But to be considered, that is the mark of a great soldier, if not a Great Captain.'

'Pardon me, General Sherman, but as both you and Field Marshall Montgomery are aware, before one appears he must have been deceased at least one hundred years to be considered a Great Captain, and even then, the decision of the Tribunal is subject to a 25 year review by the Board of Military Theorists.' [8]

'Pardon me, Field Marshall. . . ?'

'No sir, the Tribunal will not be considering shortening the standards so your case may be heard early.'

'We must be moving along now, gentleman, for as soon as General Sherman's hearing is over, we will begin reviewing the case of Count Helmuth von Moltke the Elder.' [9]

II

The Attila of the American continent.
Jefferson Davis of W.T. Sherman

'All Rise! Warriors - I will introduce the Great Captains who will hear General Sherman's case.'

'President of the Tribunal - the General Napoleon. . .

Alexander III. . .

Barca Hannibal. . .

Gauis Juluis Caesar. . .

Gustavus Adolphus. . .

Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne Turenne. . .

Eugene, Prince of Savoy-Carignan. . .

Frederick the Great. . . .' [10]

Napoleon executes a short bow and directs, 'Be seated, please.'

'As I look across this great hall, I see warriors of every description, in every kind of uniform, carrying accoutrements of every description, and armed with every sort of weaponry. I do apologize to our armoured fraternity, but the Great Hall is off limits to all chariots and tracked vehicles. But some things never change. Speaking with King Arthur, I have been informed the Great Hall of Camelot was off limits to horses. But I digress.'

'Fortunately, we all speak a universal language. . . the

language of the warrior. Many of you have been busy training in daily exercises, and some have been TDY to hell, and there is much admin work to do here in Valhalla. . . as I said, some things never change.'

'But today we shall speak about unchangeable things. . . for how does one measure a Great Captain? I know that many here in attendance are opposed to General Sherman's nomination."

'As I look at the Great Captains, I see them with many campaigns and many years of service, and they ask me how we can even consider men such as Sherman, who had so few campaigns over a relatively short period of time.' [11]

'And I say to them, we must. For no longer do the wars of mankind permit long campaigns over extended periods, as were performed by most of the Great Captains. Even the last great war, known as World War II, was conducted in barely a seven year period.' [12]

'So if we are to have new Great Captains, we must judge them not against the number or duration of their campaigns or battles, but against other things, as described by the court recorder, Colonel Holmes.'

'Also, Great Captains, including those sitting on this tribunal and those who await hearing, are not judged against technical innovations, for there will always be technical innovations on the battlefield. And who knows what awaits us in the last grand campaign?'

'The members of the tribunal will each be given an

opportunity to address General Sherman based on one of the numerous criteria. I would like to remind our visitors that it is not essential for a Great Captain to meet each of criteria--for if that were the case, there would be no Great Captains, including myself. Even I, on occasion, violated some of my numerous maxims--much to my regret.'

'Now let me directly address the criteria. First, there are 13 timeless verities of combat that we consider for selection as a Great Captain. I will briefly cover these with an explanatory note for each: [13]

1. Offensive Action Essential to Positive Combat Results. Addressed also as a principle of war, the offense is essential to winning, even in cases where a defensive posture or strategy, such as with the Confederacy in the American Civil War, seems best indicated.

2. Defensive Strength is Greater than Offensive Strength. While not listed as a principle of war, the commander who is unaware of this truth will need to be very lucky if he is going to have any kind of longevity. Clausewitz stated that the "Defense is the stronger form of combat." A military force that takes of advantage of terrain and fortifications, however hasty or well prepared, will require the attacker to use a preponderance of combat power if the offense is to be a success.

3. Defensive Posture is Necessary when Successful Offense is Impossible. Similar to economy of force, this principle recognizes that a commander who is opposed by a more powerful force has no choice but to assume a defensive posture, thus partially redressing the imbalance of forces. He is thus able to slow the advance of the enemy, and possibly beat him or wear him down so that he may regain relative superiority and thus assume the offense and obtain positive combat results.

4. Flank or Rear Attack is more likely to Succeed than Frontal Attack. Somewhat analogous to Surprise, this principle of an indirect approach is applicable to all field operations and has been around since antiquity.

5. Initiative Permits Application of Preponderant Combat Power. Seizing and maintaining the initiative has been the key of all the Great Captains of history. Initiative combines the

principles of Mass and Offense.

6. Defender's Chances of Success are Directly Proportional to Fortification Strength. Never in history has a defensive force been weakened by the use of fortifications. All fortifications can be overcome, but only if the enemy is willing to make a massive and costly effort (or they may be by-passed as in the case of the Maginot Line). Fortifications are intended to obstruct, to permit the defender to punish the attacker, and to delay.

7. An Attacker Willing to Pay the Price Can Always Penetrate the Strongest Defenses. No matter how skillful the defender, despite his defensive ability and his use of interior lines, a skillful attacker can always achieve a temporary advantage at a place and time of his choosing. (A classic example of this is Grant vs. Lee in the Virginia Campaign of 1864--while a Union victory was not always achieved, Lee was invariably forced to retreat until he could impose another temporary stalemate with the assistance of fortifications.)

8. Successful Defense Requires Depth and Reserves. In many of history's great battles, the side with the last reserves has won, such as at Waterloo and Antietam. The Battle of Kursk during World War II is a classic example of the successful use of both Depth and Reserve.

9. Superior Strength Always Wins. God has always been on the side of the biggest battalions--even in battles when the seemingly weaker side has prevailed; such advantages as surprise, terrain, the defense, etc., have provided them with a superior strength. [14]

10. Surprise Substantially Enhances Combat Power. Surprise is one of the most important principles of war.

11. Firepower Kills, Disrupts, Suppresses, and Causes Dispersion. This corollary is hard to refute. But firepower should not be equated with lethality.

12. Combat Activities are Slower, Less Productive, and Less Efficient than Anticipated. Clausewitz called it "friction in war," some the "fog of battle." The old Murphy's Law asserts that "what can go wrong will go wrong." No matter how good peacetime field tests and exercises, inefficiency must always be considered.

13. Combat is too Complex to be Described in a Single, Simple Aphorism. Any analysis or lessons drawn must be evaluated in the realities of war--all aspects, as above, must be considered--as well as the brutal, multifarious nature of combat.'

As Napoleon pauses, the tribunal members cease their murmurs. Napoleon continues, ''As can be seen, many of the above are analogous to the Principles of War. However, some members of the tribunal, at their option, will address other items as mentioned earlier. Or they may call upon the currently accepted 20th Century principles of war, of which there are from eight to eleven. In diffidence to our military theorist panel, I would like to point out the fact that even as mankind approaches the 21st Century, many of the nations adhere to these maxims somewhat differently.' [15]

'I personally will address one or more of my selected maxims for General Sherman to respond.'

'Those in attendance who are unfamiliar with my maxims are directed to Valhalla Manual VM-105.' [16]

'Are there any questions, General Sherman?'

'Then let us proceed.'

III

"What a 'buster' that man is...
In him and in him alone we seem to get
the glimpse of real genius."

Charles Francis Adams, Jr.
Letter to his father,
written while serving with
the Army of the Potomac ---1864

'The most senior of our Great Captains, Alexander, will
begin.'

'General Sherman, I, the Great Alexander the III, sometimes
feel like the father of all those sitting at the Tribunal.
Perhaps because I am the most senior, but also because a few of
those here have studied my campaigns in preparations for their
own. Pray tell, what did you do in regards to the education of
the art of war, in either your own time or for later generations
of warriors?'

General Halleck arises. 'If I may address the Tribunal,
General Napoleon? Thank you.'

'General Sherman, as General of the United States Army, from
1869-1883, established the Infantry and Cavalry School at Ft.
Leavenworth, Kansas, the forerunner of the Command and General
Staff School. He supported the development of military
professionalism by encouraging such officers as Emory Upton, [17]
who is now sitting on the Valhalla Board of Theorists, to travel
and report on foreign armies and so help further develop
professionalism. He also supported the numerous professional

journals and associations which were developed during this time. He was also instrumental in development of the Reserve Officers Training program at the land grant colleges, and assigned instructors to the various National Guards.' [18]

'Is this sufficient, General Alexander, or would you like me to continue?'

Alexander nods a dismissal, and motions to his left.

Hannibal rises, and addresses the second question. 'As you are no doubt aware, I commanded an army made up of many different factions, but they were one with my will--and my will was iron. I demanded discipline, and received it. Yet, during our preliminary review, Field Marshall Montgomery was describing your troops' lack of discipline. I believe he described it as ". . . a mob." He was especially concerned with this deplorable state during your march through Georgia and the Carolinas. Please respond.'

Sherman looks towards his counsel, Halleck, and slowly shakes his head in frustration. 'Perhaps the great Carthaginian general would understand my situation as related to his own. His campaigns were mostly recorded by his Roman enemies, men who feared and hated him. Perhaps my march orders were a bit imprecise and could have been a might confusing to some. However, make no mistake, my special purpose was well known to the War Department and to General Grant. My soldiers were not to "enter the dwellings of the inhabitants or commit any trespass." Only my officers could order the destruction of property. You

must remember, General Hannibal, my one greatest desire and principle that I held throughout the war was. . . to end the war.' [19]

Caesar asks, 'About your famous quotation, that you would "Fight till hell freezes over, then fight on the ice." I always liked that one, could you tell us about it?'

Sherman rises with a smile. 'Certainly. I didn't say it. I believe that quote, or something close to it, belongs to my friend and West Point roommate, George Henry Thomas, before or sometime during the battle of Nashville.' [20]

'Your pardon, General, I meant the one concerned with "War is Hell."'

'Well, I said it, and then I didn't exactly say it. What I said was, "War is Barbarism" and "War is cruelty and you cannot refine it," [21] and then I remember saying "War is violence." Well, hell. . . , I said it lots of times, before, during and after the war. But those damned newspapermen never were there when I said it, and when I didn't say it, they naturally screwed it up and said I did. Nope, they never got it right on-the-nail, not once, not even close.' [22]

Caesar, with a slight smile, motions to his right.

Gustavus Adolphus pushes back his chair and strides to stand in front of Sherman, who rises to attention.

'General Sherman, as you are probably aware, I was wounded numerous times in battle, and finally killed in action. It is the opinion of this tribunal that all to be judged must have

displayed courage on the field of honor. Could you address that point for us, General Sherman?'

'Sir, twice wounded on the field at Shiloh, Sunday, April 16, 1862. Shot in the hand and shoulder. Stood the field and rallied my troops, though we had been tactically surprised. [23] I further was exposed to shot and shell on further campaigns and believe I set the proper example for my troops.' [24]

'Thank you, General Sherman, for none but the brave can sit amongst us.'

As Adolphus returns to his chair, Turenne strides forward.

'Campaigns sir! Campaigns!,' barks Turenne. 'I participated in eighteen major campaigns in 51 years of service. I see from your personnel file that you participated in barely six campaigns during your four year American Civil War adventure. [25] How do you presume, sir, regardless of what the great Napoleon says, to stand before this board and ask to be one of us?'

'Sir! Sir!,' injects Captain Sir Basil Liddel Hart, 'I would like to assist General Sherman with this answer, if the Tribunal permits.'

Napoleon shrugs, and says, 'Very well, Sir Basil. Though it is somewhat unusual for one of the Board of Theorists to speak on behalf of a candidate, it is not unknown, as Jomini did for me. [26] So introduce yourself and let's be moving along. We have much to do, and I see old Von Moltke back there pawing the ground like a charger.'

'My name is Captain Sir Basil Liddel Hart, currently on the

Board of Theorists here at Valhalla. I was one of the students of General Sherman's campaigns, to include authorship of a biography. [27] I believe that I can more fully address the question of Marshall Turenne's.'

'There are numerous testimonies to the greatness of General Sherman, not counting my own. [28] But those testimonials stem from the deeds he accomplished and the legacy he left to warriors that followed.'

'Since the days of Napoleon and the immense rise of newer weapons and better communications as part of the industrial age, wars and campaigns have tended to be shorter.' [29]

Marshall Turenne shrugs and nods towards Eugene.

Eugene: 'General, I too was popular with my soldiers. While popularity should have nothing to do with being a Great Captain, I would like to point out that every man on the tribunal was respected and often revered by his soldiers and followers. How do you speak on this point? Is there any warrior in attendance here who can vouch for him?'

Sherman looks the Austrian Field Marshal directly in the eye and quickly responds, 'Would my soldiers' nickname of "Uncle Billy" help?'

Sherman continues, 'Not only did I care for them while on service, I also sought to seal the bonds of comradeship that were formed during the Civil War. After the war and up to the time of my death, I would estimate that fully one third of my pay went to veterans to help them in their need.' [30]

'In addition, I supported such veteran organizations as the Grand Army of the Republic, the Society of the Army of Tennessee, and various others. I assisted in their efforts to obtain "just" benefits for the soldiers of that conflict.' [31]

'I am of the opinion, General Sherman,' states Frederick the Great, 'that the 13 timeless verities of combat we have looked at are a good yardstick to measure a potential Great Captain against. Could you quickly review--stating frankly which you excelled at, and which you did not.'

Sherman rises, and strides before the board, starting to pace and smoke his cigar. 'Let's see. . . .'

'There's a couple of them things that don't necessarily apply to me--like that number eight--Successful Defense Requires Depth and Reserves. As a commander, I was rarely on the defense, except for that time at Shiloh when I commanded a division. But that was Grant's show. But I tell you, that sure made me a believer in number ten, that Surprise Substantially Enhances Combat Power. Shiloh was a near run thing, and while I always tried to use surprise, that darn Confederate fox Joseph Johnston was a might able opponent and always kept getting out of the trap.'

'And that one, let's see. . . , number twelve, Combat Activities are Slower, Less Productive, and Less Efficient than Anticipated. I think every commander and warrior in this room can agree with that one--but it sure is one for peacetime officers to ponder when they do their planning, especially those

who have never been in combat.'

'Now in regards to those others, except for number seven, I believe I was one of the best of my era. I knew the power of the defender. And I always went into a defensive posture, even while on the offense. And since I always retained the offensive, I was pretty much able to take my armies where I wanted.'

'No, the only one I had any trouble with was number seven, An Attacker Willing to Pay the Price Can Always Penetrate the Strongest Defense. Now Grant was a master of that, but my situation was a little different. No, I guess I was never willing to pay the price, especially if I could outmaneuver the enemy.'

'Thank you General Sherman.' Frederick nods towards Napoleon.

'Before I begin the final question,' Napoleon asks the Tribunal, 'are there any further questions?'

'Yes,' states Frederick the Great, 'I have another query. General Sherman, your greatest or proudest moment as a soldier, if you please.'

'I always remember,' Sherman says, with his face aglow, ". . . the March through Georgia. I could look forty miles in each direction and see smoke rolling up like a great bonfire."

[32]

He pauses, and a different look comes to his face. 'My proudest moment, and the moment I will always cherish, was during the Grand Review in Washington, D.C. As I rode up past the

Treasury building at the head of the Army of Tennessee, I disobeyed my own order about eyes to the front and wheeled in my saddle and looked back. "The sight was simply magnificent. The column was compact, and the glittering muskets looked like a solid mass of steel, moving with the regularity of a pendulum." He again pauses, his eyes slightly wet. 'It was. . . "the happiest and most satisfactory moment of my life."' [33]

'Spoken like a true soldier,' states Frederick the Great, who then turns to Napoleon.

Napoleon now rises and proceeds to stand in front of General Sherman. He clasps his hands behind his back, turns to his left and begins to pace back and forth. 'General Sherman, perhaps most of my military maxims dealt with the Principles of War. [34] Would you comment on a principle of war that you held significant or important for yourself.'

'Probably my best principle was seen in my actions against General Johnson, when I set out for Atlanta. Sir Basil coined a name for this type of tactic . . . I believe he calls it the *Indirect Approach*. [35] I was pretty successful until I came to that Kennesaw mountain thing . . . I didn't say it at the time but I should have called it quits long before General Thomas told me that 'One or two more such assaults will use up this army.'" [36]

CONCLUSION

He never won a battle or lost a campaign.
--Lloyd Lewis on Gen. Sherman

General Halleck arises and addresses the Tribunal.

'We have examined General Sherman before this tribunal, held him up to the fractured light of 13 standards. But does this scrutiny really address the man?'

'For what is a Great Captain? An English writer once described Great Captains as "those generals or commanders who not only bestrode their own age but who also left a lasting mark upon posterity; and who advanced military theory and the practice of the profession of arms."' [37]

Halleck continues, 'And though numerous points have been made, and could continue to be made if we debated each of the 13 verities along with the Maxims and principles of war, I would like to point out a few things. Firstly, none of the Great Captains here assembled ever faced each other in battle. [38] Also, with few exceptions history's Great Captains have experienced defeat on the battlefield, and in many cases those defeats have been crushing. [39] It is also interesting to note that many of the uniformly successful generals fought many pitched battles, and of those who did, a 70 - 90 per cent success rate is average.' [40]

Halleck pauses at this point and walks before Sherman. 'I

would like to point out that General Sherman has met any test by at least the standards set for the Great Captains - for he was the innovator of what you have heard described as the "indirect approach," as well as a master logistician. . . . He has also advanced the professions of arms to its noblest, and his name, sirs, will be long remembered--as long as battles are to be fought, or read about. A giant, sir! For it was once said by a confederate soldier that Sherman would ". . . flank the devil and make Heaven in spite of the guards," [41] the kind of man surely will be needed on Ragnarok.'

General Halleck is seated, and the tribunal picks up quills and paper to cast their vote. How will you cast yours?

AFTERWORD

They will long remember Sherman
And his streaming columns free--
They will long remember Sherman
Marching to the Sea
-- Herman Melville
"The March to the Sea"
December, 1864

In writing this paper, I have not created a Great Captain "straw man" for William Tecumseh Sherman to "bowl over." For I was not exactly certain if he should be considered a "Great Captain."

He is a great American general, no doubt, and undoubtedly an innovator in warfare. He was surely a good friend and a terrible enemy. He was all this--a ruthless, yet compassionate man--even perhaps the ideal officer, as he combined so many traits, often conflicting--to produce a bold, charismatic character. [42] I believe he is one of the finest officers the United States Military Academy has turned out.

He was also a pragmatist, a quality that so many current officers of high command are lacking (if we are too draw some lessons for the current day).

However, I respect today's officer corps for their character (though I am sometimes unsure of their soldiering abilities) and expertise. I see the Gulf War as a good example of the lack of pragmatic application of the lessons of war, though the principles were well adhered to.

In this vein, Sherman was truly a "soldier's soldier." He eschewed politics (although his good friend Grant did not). He kept his eye steadily on the military objective and viewed only the end as the proper result--if it's right, do it. [43]

He viewed the Indian Wars from such a viewpoint: end it, get it over, and move on. But that's a subject for another MSP.

Perhaps this soldierly quality--this supreme commitment to the mission--is one of the things that solidifies Sherman's eligibility as a Great Captain. Two of Sherman's contemporaries were excellent soldiers, Henry W. Halleck as planner and administrator and George H. Thomas as probably the most superb battle general (and if any general after Grant and Sherman should be praised, it is Thomas). But both are now largely forgotten by non-Civil War enthusiasts and military personnel in general.

Get the mission over, then make a just peace--perhaps that could be a general summation of his view. Perhaps not currently politically correct, but I cannot think of any current commander who would even be considered to join the Great Captains.

It is difficult to keep one eye of the current campaign, one eye on the future and another on the justification of the conflict. Avoiding such conflicting concerns Sherman said, "If you're right. . . ." [44] Perhaps it is this quality that sets him apart from most of his contemporaries and later commanders. That he deserves to be considered a Great Captain there cannot be any doubt. But is he a Great Captain?

I believe he is. But as the foregoing deliberations have

shown, I cannot prove it. He did not meet all the criteria for a Great Captain. But then how many can?

" Each of these Great Captains displayed different strengths," as Dr. Jay Luvaas said in a recent Army War College lecture concerning Great Captains. "And in every campaign there are many lessons for the student of today." [45]

A closing thought on William T. Sherman is best presented by the remarks that General F. C. Winkler made before The Society of the Army of the Cumberland upon William T. Sherman's death in 1891:

The historian of the future will note his shortcomings. Not captiously, but in the kind of spirit of impartial justice he will set them down to draw the perfect balance of his character. Let him deduct them from the qualities that mark his distinction, and we shall still see WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN looming up a superb and colossal figure in the generation in which he lived. [46]

ENDNOTES

1. Encyclopedia Britannica, vol 12., s.v. "Valhalla."
Encyclopedia Americana, vol 27. s.v. "Valhalla."

2. Ibid. The notion that it grew to include all who died heroic deaths in battle is found in numerous sources, such as above. The notion of the great commanders in Valhalla is entirely my own fantasy; something of a cross between Valhalla and Fiddler's Green (Fiddler's Green coming into use sometime as early as the 17th Century [John R. Etling, A Dictionary of Soldier Talk (New York: Scribner's, 1984), 103]). However, Valhalla as the rest of all true warriors is eluded in numerous modern day publications, such as Ivor H. Evans', Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 1157.

3. Halleck would be a logical choice to accompany Sherman for a number of reasons. Even though they did have some wartime disputes, they were friends, see James M. Merrill, William Tecumseh Sherman (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971), 182; see also John F. Marszalek, Sherman: A Soldier's Passion for Order (NY: Norton, 1993), 54-58. While they traveled to California together in July of 1864 aboard the USS Sloop Lexington, Halleck was also busy rendering the first english translation of Jomini's Life of Napoleon, even though the work was not published for another 18 years. See Halleck, Henry W., trans. Life of Napoleon by Baron Jomini (NY: Van Nostand, 1864).

4. Who Was Who in America, Vol 1, (Chicago: A. N. Marquis, 1943), 682. This is an extract from an edition of Who's Who in America. He starts off his entry with "Served 3 yrs. with 20th Mass. Volunteers, lt. to lt. col.; wounded in breast at Ball's Bluff, Oct. 21, 1861. in neck at Antietam, Sept. 17, 1862, in foot at Marye's Hill, Fredericksburg, May 3, 1863; a.-d.-c. on staff Gen. H. G. Wright, Jan. 29, until mustered out July 17, 1864, with rank of capt."

5. Trevor N. Dupuy, The Evolution of Weapons and Warfare (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1990), 326-33.

6. Trevor N. Dupuy, Understanding Defeat: How to Recover from Loss in Battle to Gain Victory in War (NY: Paragon, 1990), 291. There is much in this work on Great Captains, especially in defeat. Recommended to any one interested in studying the Great Captains.

7. David G. Chandler, The Military Maxims of Napoleon (NY: Macmillan, 1987), 55-82, lists 78 maxims. Brig. Gen. Thomas R. Phillips, Roots of Strategy: The 5 Greatest Military Classics of All Time (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1940;

repr., Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1985), 407-41, lists 115.

8. The hundred year time limit after death to be considered for becoming a Great Captain was suggested by Dr. Jay Luvaas. This eliminates extraneous discussion on such potential figures as Moltke the Elder, Ludendorff, MacArthur, etc. The Board of Military Theorists (comprising such individuals as Sun Tzu, Hart, Fuller, Upton, etc.) is a somewhat logical device in this setting for looking over such individuals as U.S. Grant, who should have appeared previously before the tribunal.

9. Sherman died Feb. 14, Moltke on April 24, 1891. It is interesting to note that the two individuals did meet. It is also reasonable to point out except for some brief combat experience with the Turkish artillery in 1839, the very short duration of Moltke's two campaigns (1864 and 1870-71). Trevor H. Dupuy, Curt Johnson and David L. Bongard, The Harper Encyclopedia of Military Biography (NY: HarperCollins, 1992), 680-81 and 512-13.

10. It was decided to use Napoleon's original selections of the Great Captains, though many, notably Liddell Hart, Great Captains Unveiled (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1990), have suggested Genhis Khan. For good discussions of other candidates see Dupuy, Understanding Defeat, and John R. Etling, The Super Strategists: Great Captains, Theorists, and Fighting Men Who Have Shaped the History of Warfare (NY: Scribner's, 1985).

11. Dr. Jay Luvaas, "What is a Great Captain? . . .", 17 September 1992, presented to the USAWC as a lecture in the Perspectives in Military History series, for the USA Military History Institute, Upton Hall Auditorium, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Professor Luvaas cites Napoleon as appearing to have been the first to identify "the Great Captains" by that name. Napoleon further lists Alexander as conducting eight campaigns, Hannibal 17, Caesar 13, Gustavus Adolphus commanded 3, Turenne in 18, Eugene 13, and Frederick 11.

12. Dr. Jay Luvaas, interview by author, USAWC, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 9 February 1993. The establishment of criteria for a "Great Captain" presents a problem for modern soldiers. No modern soldier had a chance to conduct campaigns over a lifetime as the "Great Captains" nominated by Napoleon. Therefore, the logical extension for today's nomination would not center on the number of campaigns.

13. In addition to Dupuy, Evolution of Weapons and Warfare, 326-333, see also Montgomery of Alamein, Viscount Bernard Law Montgomery. A History of Warfare (Cleveland: World, 1968) and others for further discussion of unchanging things in warfare.

14. Dupuy, Evolution of Weapons and Warfare, 335-36.

15. Etling, Super-Strategists, 322-31.
16. The best modern discussion of Napoleon's maxims is found in the annotations by Chandler, Maxims of Napoleon, 83-243, which have been updated and supplemented by the author. See also Phillips, Roots of Strategy: The 5 Greatest Military Classics of All Time, 403-41.
17. Henry P. Ball. Of Responsible Command: A History of the Army War College (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Alumni Association of the U.S. War College, 1984), 138.
18. Carol Reardon. Soldiers and Scholars: The U.S. Army and the Uses of Military History, 1865-1920 (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 14. See also Alan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America (NY: Free Press, 1984), 255-56.
19. Lloyd Lewis, Sherman: Fighting Prophet (NY: Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc., 1934), 454, acknowledges that Federal officers were shamed that outrages were committed. However, as the march progressed, a class of soldiers, bummers or hobo soldiers, free from supervision were occasionally cruel. Lewis points out that often the bummers were confused with bands of Southern freebooters, deserters, liberated convicts, and drifters, who raided the same countryside. See Marszalek, Sherman: A Soldier's Passion For Order, 298, for march orders. See also Charles Edmund Vetter, Sherman: Merchant of Terror, Advocate of Peace (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co., 1992), 257, for one principle to end war.
20. The use of the term "friend" by Sherman might better be replaced by "acquaintance." Major George Henry Thomas, "The Rock of Chickamauga", although often referred to as slow and sluggish by both Generals Grant and Sherman, was quoted often during his Nashville campaign during which sleet or freezing rain prevailed. His actual report to Grant stated that on the tenth " . . . a terrible storm of freezing rain had come . . . I am therefore compelled to wait for the storm to break and make the attack immediately after." See Wilbur Thomas, General George H. Thomas: The Indomitable Warrior (NY: Exposition Press Inc., 1964), 560.
21. Liddell Hart, Sherman: Soldier, Realist, American (NY: Dodd, Mead, 1929), 310.
22. Researching the "War is Hell" quote alone is probably worthy of a Military Study Project. Marszalek, Sherman, 477.
23. Vetter, Sherman: Merchant of Terror, Advocate of Peace, 114.

24. Page Smith, Trial By Fire: A People's History of the Civil War, Vol 5, (NY: Penguin Books, 1990), 229.

25. Sherman served in over six major Civil War campaigns, and directed two of them: The Atlanta Campaign (Dalton, Resaca, New Hope Church, and Dallas; later, Kennesaw Mountain and Peach Tree Creek, 1864) and the March to the Sea (Savannah and Carolinas, 1865). Others were first Bull Run (also called first Manassas), (July 1861), Shiloh (April 1862), Chickasaw Bluff (First Vicksburg, December 1862), Arkansas Post (January 1863), Jackson, Mississippi (under Grant in May 1863), Chattanooga (Autumn 1863), Meridian (Mississippi), (March 1864). See Roger J. Spiller, Joseph G. Dawson III, and T. Harry Williams, Dictionary Of American Military Biography (Connecticut: 1984), 993-95, and Webster's American Military Biographies (Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company [1978]), 382-84. Sherman also saw service in the Seminoles War (1835-43) and the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-48).

26. Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini, The Art of War (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1992). Reprint of 1838 edition. See also Halleck, Life of Napoleon by Jomini.

27. Hart, Sherman. See also Brian Bond, Liddell Hart: A Study of His Military Thought (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1977), for more information on his views of Sherman.

28. "Sherman proved himself to be a combination of Machiavelli, Vauban, Frederick the Great, Jomini and Clausewitz" states Vetter, Sherman: Merchant of Terror, 299; as well as stating that "Without a doubt, Sherman was a great general...a man of superior intellect, and through practical observation and logical reasoning, he developed his theory of war (22)." Jones Archer, The Art of War in the Western World (NY: Oxford, 1987), 417, called him "... the brilliant, innovative and politically astute General W. T. Sherman." Dupuy, Harper Encyclopedia, 681, stated "Sherman was an intelligent, aggressive, imaginative commander and administrator; a consummate soldier." The list goes on.

29. Ties in with endnote #12, Luvaas interview. Dupuy, Evolution of Weapons and Warfare, 286-87, discusses weapons' lethality through the ages. Dupuy points out that as technology advances, so do weapons, which then changes tactics. On the extreme end of the lethality spectrum, the atomic detonations that brought the end to the Second World War introduced a potentially self-destructive tactic -- a final and decisive tactic that potentially could shorten wars and their campaigns.

30. Burke Davis, Sherman's March (NY: Vintage, 1988), 299.

31. Marszalek, Sherman, 468-70.

32. Davis, Sherman's March, 107.
33. Ibid, 293.
34. See Chandler, Maxims of Napoleon, 249.
35. See Bond, Liddell Hart: A Study of His Military Thought, 47-48. A discussion of Sherman's maneuvering General J. Johnston out of successive strong defensive positions by advancing in a wide, flanking maneuver. Sherman was aware of Grant's costly frontal assaults in Virginia.
36. See Marszalek, Sherman: A Soldier's Passion For Order, 269-75. In Sherman's constant flanking of Johnston's defensive positions in the slow drive to Atlanta, impatience was beginning to set in. In accessing Johnston's Kennesaw positions, "Sherman repeatedly rode his lines." As early as 5 June, Sherman said, "I will not run head on his fortifications." However, on 24 June, the order was given for a head on attack that was a colossal failure. Sherman was never to repeat his Kennesaw Mountain mistake.
37. Philip J. Haythornthwaite, Invincible Generals: Gustavus Adolphus, Marlborough, Frederick the Great, George Washington, Wellington (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1992), 5.
38. Dupuy, Understanding Defeat, 291.
39. Ibid, 9.
40. Ibid, 22.
41. Lloyd Lewis, Sherman: Fighting Prophet (NY: Hardcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), 360. For the many leading military quotation books (J. Shafritz's, Words on War, J. Wintle, The Dictionary of War Quotations, COL R. Heinl, Jr., Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotation, and P. Tsouras, Warriors' Words), Lewis' book holds a wealth of often quoted Sherman remarks. My other favorite quote Lewis has on p. 360, (made famous by the PBS Home Video film series, Ken Burns, The Civil War), occurred when Confederate soldiers scoffed at the news that their beloved Bedford Forrest, "First with the Most", had ruined a tunnel in the Yankees' rear. The cynical Sons of the South signed, "Sherman carries a duplicate tunnel."
42. Vetter, Sherman: Merchant of Terror, 299.
43. Merrill, William Tecumseh Sherman, 315.
44. Ibid, 393. See also Vetter, Sherman: Merchant of Terror, 292.

45. Luvaas, "What is a Great Captain? . . .", 1992. A discussion of Dodge's work on the Great Captains, published over a century ago, distinguishes between great warriors and Great Captains. The former did great deeds and often changed the course of the world's events, however only a Great Captain could teach posterity "lessons in the art of war."

46. Quoted in Marszalek, Sherman, xv.

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